

Questions and Suggestions for further learning

A BOOK OF FARM BABIES

by Sarah Prince

Apart from wanting parents and children to enjoy a fun little story together and fall in love with some very cute baby animals, my main aim was to introduce very young children to the different animals found on farms and the sounds they make. I have also included a different preposition on each page as well.

If you choose to use it as more of an educational tool, then this book contains a great deal of learning for young children. It has number of layers, allowing it to be enjoyed with newborn babies, all the way up to five or six-year-olds.

For instance, I have included:

- The names of the baby animals
 - The sounds they make
 - Where they are on the farm
 - Fun facts about each animal
- A range of rare and unusual words
- Numerous prepositions such as in, under, over, through etc.
- Coloured flowers on each page which are the code for the colouring-in page
- Silhouettes which tell their own little story about a very greedy goat!

The first thing to remember when reading books with young children, is that they *love* to be *involved* in the story, so encourage them to act like puppies, or oink like piggies. Ask them questions and *wait* for them to answer, there's no need to rush, finishing the book is not important. Learning and having fun with the pictures, words, and the story – that's what's important!

The silhouettes throughout the book also provide a great learning opportunity. Count the hay bales on each page and ask who is eating the hay? Is it the cat? Is it the mouse? Or is it that greedy goat? The silhouettes are also of adult animals so some of them look quite different from their babies.

The book can also be used as a memory game. Each time you pick it up, ask the children who can remember what the name of the farmer was? Was it Farmer Black? Then ask where were those little lambs? What were they doing? And what sound were they making?

As with all my 'Questions and Suggestions' pages, I have included dozens of examples here, but don't think you have to ask them all, or do the actions in one sitting. These lessons could last for weeks! **Don't let too many lessons and learning interfere with the fun!** Some questions are obviously aimed at older children, but with babies both ask *and answer* some fun questions along the way.

The beginning of the story

Why is Farmer Brown busy? What is he doing? Is that him on the tractor?

For older children, what does the word 'extremely' mean?

Why are the animals busy? What might they be doing to look after their babies?

What happens in Spring?

This could extend into numerous lessons about the seasons. What are the different seasons, when do they occur, and what happens in each season?

Why do many animals have their babies in Spring and not Winter?

This could also extend into countless lessons about when, where and how animals have babies e.g. kangaroos keep their babies in pouches, some babies hatch from eggs, some babies can run as soon as they are born, why is that? etc.

What is a tractor and what does it do?

What are some of the jobs that need to be done on a farm?

This could extend into so many lessons about the different kinds of farms there are, planting, harvesting, animal care etc. You could explore the transport and number of people involved in bringing food from the farms into the cities, to the different shops, and finally to the table.

Look at the silhouette and discuss what you see.

Kittens purring in the pantry

What will kittens grow up to be? What other animal babies are called kittens? e.g. rabbits and rats!

Do you have a cat? What kind of pets do you have?

What is purring? What other sounds does a cat make?

Why would someone on a farm need a pantry? What kind of things would you keep in a pantry?

Does your house have a pantry? What might those naughty kittens be doing in the pantry?

Can you think of any songs, books or poems about cats or kittens?

Collect books about cats to make a display and spend some time reading all about cats e.g. *Slinky Malinki*, *The Cat in the Hat*, etc. Read A.A. Milne's delightful poem *Pinkle Purr* and write your own poems about a kitten or some cats. Fill one leg of some old black stockings with stuffing to make a tail, then tie the other leg around the child's waist. You could use some white tape to give it some stripes!

Focus on the illustrations and talk about their stripes and what kind of kittens they might be.

You could look ahead to the fact pages and talk about cats being good 'Mousers'!

Explore the preposition 'in'. Put things *in* boxes, *in* drawers, *in* cupboards, *in* the car, etc. Get the children to get *in* boxes, *in* cupboards, *in* the car etc.

Look at the silhouettes and count the hay bales (and wonder why on Earth I didn't put 20 bales on the tractor instead of just 19! Perhaps Farmer Brown dropped one. We shall never know!)

Kids bleating by the beehives

What will these kids grow up to be? What other babies are called kids? ie us!

What are Male and female goats called?

What kind of a sound is bleating? Can you bleat like a baby goat?

Discuss how goats are very good at climbing and how they like to head butt things! Boys in particular will like to play this game and pretend to be goats! You could watch some of the delightful online videos of baby goats playing and jumping about. Sound out the 'b' sounds on the page *bleating*, *by*, *beehives*. What other words start with 'B'?

What do goats eat? Do they only live on farms or are there wild goats and where do they live?

What can we make from goat's milk?

Buy some goat's milk or cheese and compare how they taste to other milks and cheeses

What are beehives? Who lives in a beehive? Why do people keep beehives?

This could lead to lots of lessons about bees and how they need flowers and nectar to make honey and how they dance to communicate to one another! Make some honey crackles together or look up other honey recipes you could make.

Focus on the illustrations and talk about their big, long ears!

You could look ahead to the fact pages and decide if these might be Nanny goats or Billy goats (there's no way to tell!), but the kids will love the names Nanny and Billy!

Explore the preposition 'by'. Stand side *by* side, that house is *by* the river etc.

Look at the silhouettes, count the bales again, and begin the discussion of who ate the hay bale. Ask why does the silhouette of the goat have horns? Do all goats have horns?

Lambs baaing over the bridge

What do lambs grow up to be?

What are male and female sheep called? What is a collection of sheep called?

Can you baa like a lamb?

Go online and compare the sounds that sheep and goats make. You could watch some online videos of lambs being incredibly cute! Have fun reading the wonderful *Where is the Green Sheep?* by Mem Fox – a delight for little kids! You could make cut outs of the sheep in the story and hide them around the house/room for the children to find.

Why do farmers keep sheep on their farms? Talk about meat, wool and milk.

What kind of sheep are there in the world? Are they all white or do they come in different colours?

Do red woolly jumpers come from red woolly sheep?

Focus on the illustrations and talk about their woolly coats! What kind of things are made from sheep's wool?

You could look ahead to the fact pages and discuss how wool is made into socks and jumpers.

Collect lots of woolly things and make a big display. Have someone show the children how to spin, weave, knit or crochet. Do some finger knitting or weaving with the children. You could even try dyeing wool various colours using different flowers or tea.

What is a bridge? What are bridges for? How do they make a bridge?

Collect photos of bridges and discuss what they are made from, how long they are, how high they are, what travels on bridges and where you find bridges. Learn about the six types of bridges – the beam, the truss, the arch, the suspension, the cantilever, and the cable-stay.

Explore the preposition 'over'. What things can the children jump *over*? What things go *over* bridges? What things go *over* our heads? e.g. jumpers, birds, bridges, planes, clouds, etc.

Look at the silhouettes, count the bales and ask was it the cat that ate the hay? Who was it? Talk about how the silhouette looks like a woolly adult sheep and not a young lamb.

Foals whinnying under the windmill

What will a foal grow up to be?

What are male and female horses called? What is a collection of horses called?

What other sounds do horses make? Let's hear your best horse impersonations!

What kind of horses are there in the world? What are the different coloured horses called? e.g. palomino, dun, chestnut etc. Talk about mustangs and brumbies and other wild horses.

What are the differences between zebras, horses and donkeys?

What do we use horses for?

Explore horse racing, gymkhanas, dressage, pony clubs etc. Set up your own gymkhana in the backyard where children can pretend to be horses and jump over jumps etc. Research work horses, plough horses, horse and carts, cowboys and their horses, jackaroos and jillaroos etc. Investigate the clothes people wear when riding horses. Compare horses' hooves and human toenails, horses' hair and human hair. Talk about how horse manes and tails are plaited just like human hair. Look at violin and cello bows and how they are made from horsehair.

What is a windmill, what is it for? Why would Farmer Brown have one on his farm?

Windmills can grind grain into flour, pump water or produce electricity. Make a display of windmills from around the world. Make some paper windmills for the children to blow on.

Focus on the illustrations and talk about their whiskery chins!

You could look ahead to the fact pages and talk about when milk was delivered by horse and cart. Explore the preposition 'under'. Put things *under* each other, what lives *under* the ground, *under* rocks, *under* water, what is *under* your feet? etc.

Look at the silhouettes, again count the bales and talk about how the cat has now moved.

Mouselings squeaking inside the shed

What are other names for mouse babies? How many babies do mice have?

Can you squeak like a mouse? What other things make a squeaking sound? e.g. wheels, doors etc.

Why would they be living in Farmer Brown's shed? Do you think he would want them there?

Why do mice have such big ears and long whiskers?

What are some famous mice? e.g. Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Stewart Little.

There are so many mouse movies or cartoons to watch. Talk about what it would be like to be the size of a mouse living in our big world. How would you get into bed or eat your dinner? Get the children on the ground and look at the world from a mousie point of view!

Make sure they lick their paws and wipe their whiskers! Read Rose Fyleman's poem *Mice* – I think mice are rather nice... and discuss whether the children like mice or not. A.A.

Milne's *Missing* is also a delight especially his 'woffelly nose!' which can lead to a discussion of how authors and poets sometimes make up words!

Focus on the illustrations and talk about how one little mouseling is sleeping!

You could look ahead to the fact pages and talk about keeping mice as pets.

Explore the preposition 'inside', e.g. *inside* versus *outside*. What is found *inside* a house? What is *inside* us? Put things *inside* a box and play a memory game or a touchy/feely game.

Look at the silhouettes, again count the bales – how many bales are left and who is eating them? Do you think the horse and the sheep might eat some hay too?

Owlets hooting above the haystack

What is an owlet? What kind of sounds do owls make?

Where do owls live? Why would they be above the haystack?

What kind of owls are there? What kind of owls do we have in Australia?

Why do owls have such big eyes? Why don't we see owls in the daytime?

Think of some books or movies which have owls in them, e.g. Winnie the Pooh, or the beautiful picture book *Owl Babies* by Martin Waddell and Patrick Benson (and there's lots of others!). Read the Edward Lear's poem *The Owl and the Pussycat*. Sound out the 'h' sounds on the page *hooting, haystack*. What other words start with 'H'?

Focus on the illustrations and talk about how one little owlet is cocking his head to the side!

You could look ahead to the fact pages and ask who has ever heard an owl hooting in the night? Get the children to make some hooty owl sounds!

Explore the preposition 'above'. Put things *above* each other. What is *above* our heads in the room?

What things might be *above* us in the sky, in the day, and at night?

Look at the silhouettes, again count the bales, and this time talk about how the mouse has moved.

Cubs yelping beyond the backyard

What other names are there for fox babies? What other animal babies are called cubs?

What are male and female foxes called?

What sort of a sound is yelping? What other noises do foxes make?

What kind of foxes are there in the world? How are foxes different from dogs?

What do you have in your backyard? What would Farmer Brown have in his backyard?

Draw pictures of your backyard or draw pictures of the *best* backyard in the whole wide world. What would be in it and why?

Focus on the illustrations and talk about how one fox cub has his tongue sticking out!

You could look ahead to the fact pages and talk about how a fox might be sneaky or clever.

Read the wonderful *Rosie's Walk* by Pat Hutchins and talk about whether the fox in the story is sneaky or clever. Also talk about whether Rosie knows he's there or not! Talk about the other animals you can see in the book.

Explore the preposition 'beyond'. What is *beyond* the back fence? What is *beyond* what you can hear/see e.g. What is *beyond* the horizon? Dog whistles are *beyond* human hearing.

Look at the silhouettes, count the bales, and ask does Farmer Brown know his hay is disappearing?

Snakelets hissing through the high grass

Do snakes lay eggs or build a nest? Where do snakes have their babies?

Why would they be in the high grass?

Can you wriggle around on the floor and hiss like a snake, without using your arms!

What kind of snakes do we have in the world, or in Australia?

Collect photos of snakes from around the world. What is the longest snake in the world? Use a tape measure to demonstrate. Can snakes swim? Can they climb trees? Draw some brightly coloured sea snakes. Perhaps attend a *Snakes Alive!* (or similar) seminar and find out some amazing snake facts.

What is the difference between snakes and lizards? What do snakes and lizards eat?

What does a snake skeleton look like?

What does a snakeskin look like? Why does a snake shed its skin?

Focus on the illustrations and talk about why the snakelets have their tongues out!

You could look ahead to the fact pages and talk about why you should *never* try and touch a snake and what to do if you see one.

Explore the preposition 'through'. What can we go *through* e.g. tunnels, doorways, mud, water.

Look at the silhouettes, again count the bales, and this time count how many animals there are. Get the children to recall what the names are of each animal.

Turkeylings gobbling beside the garden gate

What are turkeylings? What is another name for baby turkeys?

Can you make a gobbling noise like a turkey?

What are the differences between chickens, ducks, swans, and turkeys?

Collect photos or make drawings of each one and discuss how they look the same and also point out the differences.

What kinds of things would Farmer Brown be growing in his garden? What do you have growing in your garden?

Plant some seeds or seedlings in pots or in the garden and watch them grow. What do plants need to grow? You could plant things to eat like spinach or lettuces (something fast growing), or just flowers to brighten up the garden. Can you eat flowers? What flowers can you eat? Draw a picture of your garden and talk about what's in it. Try drawing your garden from a mouse's point of view, or from an eagle's perspective. How are they different?

Focus on the illustrations and count how many turkeylings there are.

You could look ahead to the fact pages and discuss what the Native Americans used turkey feathers for and talk about how important the Chief was to a tribe and why.

Explore the preposition 'beside'. Put things *beside* each other. Draw a map of the street and stick photos of each house on it with all the houses *beside* each other.

Look at the silhouettes, again count the bales and ask who is eating them and talk about how different adult turkeys looks compared to their babies.

Foals hee-hawing down by the hedge

What other babies are called foals?

What kind of sound is hee-hawing? Can you make a sound like a donkey?

What is the difference between a horse and a donkey?

What are donkeys used for by people around the world?

Who are some famous donkeys? e.g. Eeyore from *Winnie the Pooh* and Donkey from *Shrek*

Watch one of these movies and enjoy the funny things they say and do. Act out or draw pictures of your favourite donkey scene from the movies and explain why you like it. There are some super cute paper plate donkeys you can make or even have a game of pin the tail on the donkey!

What is a hedge? What are hedges made from?

Go for a walk/drive and see if you can find some hedges in your area.

Focus on the illustrations and talk about how hairy their ears are! Are your ears hairy?

You could look ahead to the fact pages and decide if these foals will grow up to be Jacks or Jennys.

Explore the double preposition 'down by'. What is *down by* the back shed? Or *down by* the river?

Look at the silhouettes, again count the bales and decide who might be eating them and talk about how different the donkey silhouette looks compared to the horse.

Chicks cheeping behind the chookhouse

What is a chick? Are all baby birds called chicks?

What noises do chickens and roosters make? Can you make some rooster noises?

Explore words such as cheeping, chirping, clucking, squawking etc.

What does chook mean? Why do we call it a chookhouse? What do we keep chickens for?

Research the different kinds of chickens there are and the different coloured eggs they lay. If possible bring in some chickens for the children to pat. Bring in some eggs and cook some omelettes or scrambled eggs. Make a list of everyone's favourite ways of eating eggs.

What other things can we do with eggs or eggshells?

Make an eggshell garden, draw faces on them so when the grass grows it looks like they have hair! Paint or dye Easter eggs even if it isn't Easter! And if you want to get even more elaborate, using a fine paintbrush, coat flowers such as violets in egg-whites, carefully sprinkle castor sugar all over them, and put them in the oven on a very low heat to make sugared violets, then decorate cup cakes with them.

Focus on the illustrations and talk about how one little chicken is looking down at his toes?

You could look ahead to the fact pages and decide if they might grow up to be hens or roosters.

Explore the preposition 'behind'. What can you find *behind* your school or house. Get the children to line up and work out who is *behind* them in the line.

Look at the silhouettes, again count the bales, there aren't many left now! Talk about how different the chicken and the turkey look.

Froglets croaking next to the creek

What are froglets? Are they the same as tadpoles?

What are the differences between frogs and toads?

Go online and look up the frog watch sites and see what frogs might live in your area.

Find out what noises frogs make. Explore the life cycle of a frog. Watch a video of tadpoles growing and changing into frogs. What kind of frogs are there and what different noises do they make? Stick/sew some eyes onto old socks and make Froggie style puppets then sing some frog songs e.g. *Five Little Speckled Frogs*, *Heigh-Ho Said Anthony Rowley*, and my favourite – *Galumph Went The Little Green Frog*.

What is a creek? Is it the same as a stream or a brook?

Why are frogs good to have in a pond or a creek?

Go for a walk or drive and explore a nearby creek and see what you can find.

Focus on the illustrations and talk about their big speckled eyes?

You could look ahead to the fact pages and make some pobblebonk noises!

Explore the double preposition 'next to'. Put things *next to* each other. In a car park what car is *next to* ours, in a supermarket what is *next to* the apples? etc.

Look at the silhouettes, again count the bales, and talk about how the chicken is now on the tractor too. Also talk about how tiny the frog is compared to everyone else.

Goslings honking amongst the herbs

What will goslings grow up to be?

What are male and female geese called? What is a collection of geese called?

Why do you think the geese might be in the garden? What are they doing there? Why are geese good to have in a garden?

Do geese lay eggs? Can you eat goose eggs?

Can you walk like a goose and make a honking sound like a goose?

What are herbs? How do we use them?

Collect some herbs and add them to a pizza or in an omelete. You could dry them, label them and talk about what each one is good for e.g. cooking, health, healing etc. Collect seeds and plant some herbs in the garden. Talk about the different herbs people from different countries use for cooking and flavouring their food?

Focus on the illustrations and talk about their cute little black legs and beaks?

You could look ahead to the fact pages and pretend you are a watchdog goose!

Explore the preposition 'amongst'. Hide things *amongst* the plants in your garden. What might live *amongst* the herbs and flowers?

Look at the silhouettes, again count the bales, and count how many animals there are now.

Piglets oinking out by the orchard

What will piglets grow up to be? What are male and female pigs called?

What colour are pigs? Are pigs the same as hogs and boars?

What other noises do they make? Can you make noises like a pig?

Can you think of some famous pigs?

Sing some songs, write a poem, or watch a movie about some famous pigs (*Charlotte's Web*, *Babe*, *Peppa Pig* etc.) Let's hear your best Peppa Pig impersonation! Talk about how some people have pigs as pets and how smart they are. If you had a pet pig what would you call it? Write a story about your pet pig and what you would do together.

What is an orchard? What kind of trees do you have in an orchard?

What kind of food comes from an orchard? What are your favourite fruits and nuts?

Bring in a collection of fruits and nuts from an orchard and try them.

Focus on the illustrations and talk about their funny wrinkly noises!

You could look ahead to the fact pages and discuss why bearded pigs might be called bearded pigs, and why warty pigs might be called warty pigs! Find some photos of them online.

Explore the double preposition 'out by'. What is *out by* the shed, *out by* the fence, or *out by* the car.

Look at the silhouettes, again count the bales, there are only five left now! Do you think Farmer Brown has even noticed?

Calves mooing near the milking shed

What will these calves grow up to be? Who can moo like a cow?

What other animals have calves as babies? e.g. whales, elephants.

What is a male and female cow called? What is a collection of cows called?

Why would the cows be near the milking shed, what happens in there?

What kind of food do we make from milk?

Bring in some milk products to try e.g. yoghurt, cream, milk, cheese, ice-cream. For those who are lactose intolerant, talk about the alternative milk products there are, e.g. nut milk and cheese, coconut yoghurt and ice-cream. Can you think of some famous cows e.g. the cow that jumped over the moon, the crazy cows in the movie *Barnyard!* Perhaps it's time to sing *Old MacDonald Had a Farm!*

How do they farm cattle in the outback? e.g. with motorbikes or even helicopters!

Focus on the illustrations and talk about their big flat noses! (also talk about how their tongues can lick inside their nostrils! That always grosses kids out, get them to try and do it!)

You could look ahead to the fact pages and talk about why we have cows on farms.

Explore the preposition 'near'. What is *near* us in this room? What shops are *near* our house? Look at the silhouettes, again count the bales, and count how many animals there are now.

Ducklings quacking underneath the quince tree

What is a duckling? What colour are ducklings? Are all ducklings the same colour?

What sound do ducks make? Who can waddle and quack like a duck?

How can you tell the difference between a male duck and a female duck?

What do ducks eat? Why do ducks have webbed feet?

What kind of ducks are there in the world?

There are all sorts of 'duck' books for little kids, including some older classics e.g. *Jemima Puddleduck*, or *The Ugly Duckling*. Name some famous ducks and see who can talk like Daffy Duck or Donald Duck! Sing the *Five Little Ducks* song and do the actions.

What is a quince tree?

Bring in some quinces to try (they taste disgusting raw and have to be cooked!) – cook them up and have them on ice-cream – or bring in some quince jam or quince paste to try.

Focus on the illustrations and talk about the little duck that is nibbling his brother!

You could look ahead to the fact pages and talk about all the different noises ducks make.

Explore the preposition 'underneath'. What is *underneath* the bed. Everyone get *underneath* the table! Hide things *underneath* a sheet and play a memory game.

Look at the silhouettes, again count the bales, there are only four bales left now. It looks like the fox might be chasing that little frog!

Crias humming in front of the homestead

What is a cria? Are there other animals who call their babies crias? What does cria mean?

Do alpacas really hum? What did your Mum do to comfort you when you were a baby e.g. sung lullabies, gave you cuddles, etc.

Explore the different lullabies parents sing in different cultures and countries.

Where do alpacas live? What is the difference between an alpaca and a llama?

What can be made from alpaca wool?

Go online and explore the amazing colours and clothes the Peruvians make using alpaca and llama wool. Bring in some alpaca wool jumpers and beanies and feel how soft they are.

What is a homestead? What does your home look like?

Either take photos of everyone's homes or draw pictures and talk about the differences and similarities and who lives there.

Focus on the illustrations and talk about how cute their little faces are!

You could look ahead to the fact pages and talk about what good 'watchdogs' they make!

Explore the complex preposition 'in front of'. Put things *in front of* each other. What is *in front of* our house? Line the children up and ask who is *in front of* you in the line.

Look at the silhouettes, again count the bales, there are only three bales left now!

Bunnies nibbling the nasturtiums

What will a bunny grow up to be? What else do we call baby rabbits?

Do rabbits make sounds?

The bunnies are the only animal not to make a sound in this book, why is that? Go back through the book and make all the sounds of the other animals.

Does anyone have a pet rabbit? What are they called? What colour are they? Do they make noises?

What kinds of rabbits are there in the world? What is the biggest rabbit in the world?

Can you think of some famous rabbits? e.g. Peter Rabbit, Bugs Bunny. Read some of the great bunny books available e.g. *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, *The Flopsy Bunnies*, *Little Grey Rabbit*, *The Velveteen Rabbit*, *Guess How Much I Love You*, etc.

What does nibbling mean?

Hop about like bunnies and try nibbling on some lettuce or a carrot!

What is a nasturtium? Do you have them in your garden? What colours do they come in?

Bring in some nasturtiums for the children to try – you can eat the flowers and the leaves, but be warned, they are quite peppery! Go for a walk and see if you have nasturtiums in your neighbourhood.

What flowers do you have in your garden?

Draw some pictures of them or make big posters of the different flowers you have found.

Focus on the illustrations and talk about how one bunny is trying to hide behind the other!

You could look ahead to the fact pages and talk about what a burrow is.

Explore the preposition 'on'. Everyone get *on* the couch! What is *on* the table? Stand *on* the grass, *on* the pavement etc. Sit *on* the chair – this could extend into a fun game of musical chairs!

Look at the silhouettes, how many animals and how many hay bales are there now? Do you think Farmer Brown has even noticed?

Puppies barking outside the backdoor

Hands up who likes puppies!

Does anyone have a puppy or a dog?

What is your favourite kind of dog?

What kind of dogs are these puppies?

Make a big poster or a book of the different kind of dogs there are. Which is the smallest dog in the world? Which is the biggest? Read *Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy* and see what dogs you find in there. Make a big list of all the famous dogs from movies and stories (there are lots!). Go for a walk around the block and see how many different dogs you can find. This can also extend into safety around dogs – what does it mean when a dog growls, learn about the body language of dogs and why they bark. Discuss what to do if you meet one in the street, etc. Make a list of the different commands dogs can learn e.g. sit, stay, roll over, play dead! Watch some videos online about all the tricks dogs can do, or the different ways dogs help people e.g. sheep dogs, guide dogs etc.

Why would a farmer need a dog?

Watch the movie *Babe* together and talk about how dogs (and piglets!) help farmers.

Focus on the illustrations and talk about how one has his tongue out and how happy he looks!

You could look ahead to the fact pages and talk about what you would call these pups if they were yours. Also discuss what 'commands' are and what commands you would teach them.

Explore the preposition 'outside'. Explore the difference between *inside* and *outside*. What things are *outside* your back door – are there puppies!?!

Look at the silhouettes, how many animals and how many hay bales are there now? Do you think Farmer Brown has even noticed? Look out Farmer Brown don't run over that chicken!

Billy Brown gurgling between Grandma and Grandpa!

Who is Billy Brown do you think? Do you think that might be Farmer Brown in the picture?

What does gurgling sound like? What other sounds do babies make?

Watch some funny online baby videos. Collect photos of the children with their Grandparents. Make a list of what each child calls their Grandparents e.g. Granny, Nana, Nonna, Yaya. Use a map of the world (or Australia) to show where everyone's Grandparents came from. Get the children to draw portraits of their Grandparents then make frames to give them as presents. Talk about things the children do with their Grandparents.

Focus on the illustrations and talk about how happy they all look together!

Explore the preposition 'between'. Use a bookshelf or a car park to explore the word *between*.

Look at the silhouette and talk about where all the animals have gone and what happened to the hay.

Have fun with the colouring-in pages

Photocopy and enlarge the colouring-in pages in the back of the book. Using the flowers found throughout the book as a code, work out where each baby animal is on the farm, and add them to

the picture (either with drawings or cut out images). Ask questions along the way, such as, who was next to the creek? Who was by the beehives? Then colour-in the whole farm! If you are clever, you could make the picture huge, so more than one child could work on a communal farm to colour-in!

Make it a memory game

Before you re-read the book each time, make it an opportunity to play a memory game. Ask the children who was going *over* the bridge, or *under* the windmill, or *in front of* the homestead? Ask them who made a *bleating* sound, who was *oinking* out by the orchard, or which animal *hums* to its babies? There are so many questions you could ask such as, *how many* donkeys were there, *how many* puppies? What are baby mice called? What are baby horses called? etc.

Go back through and explore the silhouettes throughout the book

‘Read’ the book using only the silhouettes, then discuss what silhouettes are and how they have no features, but you can still tell who or what they are. Darken the room and using a light source on a white wall, make hand shadows on the wall. Go online to find out how to make some simple animal shapes. Alternatively you could look at how to make a shadow puppet theatre using a large box and some tissue paper (very easy to do!). You can keep your puppets as black shadows or make cut outs and add cellophane to give them some colour.

Look more closely at shadows. On a sunny day go outside and have some fun making whole body shadows. Get the children to stretch out their arms then crouch into a ball and watch how the shadow changes. Go out in the morning, noon and afternoon and show the children how their shadows shrink and grow. Go out on a cloudy day and discuss why there are no shadows at all. Use chalk to trace a shadow then come back later and talk about where it has gone, how it has changed. You could even work out how to set up a sun dial to tell the time – this could be as simple as putting a stick in the ground and marking where the shadows are every hour. Go online to get more ideas, there are *lots* of things you can do with shadows! You could also use large sheets of paper to make silhouettes of each child and talk about how even though they have no eyes or mouths you can still tell who is who!

Go back and explore all the prepositions in the book

Open the book at random and discuss whichever preposition you open to and see if the children can remember what they mean and demonstrate what *in*, *under*, *over*, *through* are. Repeat this game again and again or better still get the kids themselves to close their eyes and pick a page. Try to get the children to think outside the room e.g. Who lives in the house *next to* ours? What things might fly *above* our school? What is *beyond* the backyard?

Sing-a-long

Sometimes engaging young children in a book is hard work, but don’t force anything, if they decide they want a different book – well so be it! One way of engaging children is to have lots of sing-a-longs during story-time. A farm book of course lends itself perfectly to singing about Old MacDonald, but substitute the line ‘*Old MacDonald had a farm...*’, for ‘*Farmer Brown he had a farm...*’. You could choose to sing the song on every page including each baby name and sound, or else just break into song if you see the children getting restless!

Other songs could include: *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed* (just substitute ‘monkeys’ for any other animal e.g. Five little turkeylings jumping on the bed!); *Three Little Kittens*; *Hey Diddle Diddle*; *Mary had a Little Lamb*; *Little Bo Peep*; *Hickory Dickory Dock*; *The Country Mouse and the Town Mouse*; *Five Little Speckled Frogs*; *Heigh-Ho Said Anthony Rowley*; *Galumph Went The Little Green Frog*; *Five Little Ducks*; *Goosey Goosey Gander*; *The Beehive Song*; *B-I-N-G-O*; *I Bought a Cat*; *Horsey Horsey*; *There was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*; *Little Peter Rabbit*; *Would you like to Swing on a Star?* etc. etc. etc!

Watch some great 'farm' type movies

There are some fabulous movies for kids about animals, but again I warn you - While I love watching kid's movies and so much learning can come from them, **parents and teachers need to be acutely aware that many movies have some incredibly scary scenes for young children.**

Barnyard for instance is such a fun movie, but the coyotes are truly frightening. Paddington Bear is adorable, but Nicole Kidman's character (who does not appear in any of the books by the way) is quite terrifying. Often characters are really mean and nasty to one another (*Rugrats* is a classic example), or violence is cleverly disguised as humour (the old *Bugs Bunny* and *Roadrunner* cartoons are good examples of this). Having said that, some great movies about farms include:

Barnyard; Shaun the Sheep; Babe; Farmageddon; Peter Rabbit; Home on the Range, etc.

Read some great 'farm' type books

There are probably millions of books about farms for kids, including of course non-fiction ones, but a weeny list that I can remember off the top of my head include the following:

Where is the Green Sheep?; Barnyard Dance!; Moo, Baa, La, La, La!; Peter Rabbit; Rosie's Walk; Hello Farm; Little Blue Truck; Around the Farm; Spot goes to the Farm; Hogwash!; The Big Red Barn; Click, Clack Moo, Cows That Type!; The Little Red Hen; Down by the Barn; Cows in the Kitchen; Night Night Farm; The Enormous Potato; Hattie and the Fox; This Little Chick; Giggle Giggle Quack!; The Grumpy Morning; My Farm, etc. etc. etc.!

Make a list of male, female, and baby names of animals

Draw up some columns on a large sheet of paper and make a list of as many animals as the children can remember from the book (you could just stick to the farm animals or extend the list to include any animals). In the first column write down the names we use for the males, then for the females, and finally the babies! You could also draw, or use photos, of each animals to add to your page.

Make a book of animal collectives

Make a book of animal collectives e.g. a *gaggle* of geese, a *flock* of sheep etc. Again, draw, use photos, or cut out groups of animals for each page. If you choose to make this book about other animals, not just from this book, you could add in a map to show what countries they come from. Alternatively pin a map of the world on the wall and put labels to show where each one lives.

Have a 'Farm Day'

If you are lucky enough to live near a farm, then organise a visit, if that is far too hard, then have your own Farm Day with soft toys instead! You could ask a spinning group to bring in some unspun wool; bring in jams and honey and other produce to try; provide hay bales to climb on, make a collection of toy tractors, make a scarecrow – be as creative as you can!